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ABSTRACT

The monograph describes 11 exemplary programs selected in 1987 by the J. M. (Jeremiah Milbank) Foundation from 154 programs providing vocational services to persons with disabilities. Programs were selected in four categories: community-based work adjustment, consortium-based transition, supported work in small communities, and work services for the severely disabled. Descriptions typically include a comprehensive discussion of the program's history, services, and strengths, as well as illustrations, the name of a contact person, address, and phone number. Also provided for each category is a chart showing how excellence was measured, and median values for programs evaluated. A summary section for each category identifies trends and issues. The programs selected include: Vocational Guidance Services, Cleveland, Ohio; Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, Inc., Louisville, Kentucky; Goodwill Industries of New Jersey, Inc., Harrison, New Jersey; Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (CEP), Inc., Detroit Lakes, Minnesota; International Center for the Disabled (ICD), New York, New York; Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc., Barre, Vermont; PACE Training and Evaluation Center, Star City, West Virginia; Washington County Vocational Workshop, Nashville, Illinois; Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado; Napa Valley Products, Services, and Industries, Inc., Napa, California; and Pioneer Center for the Exceptional, McHenry, Illinois. (DB)

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LEARNING FROM THE BEST 1987

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THE J.M. FOUNDATION 1987 NATIONAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

A Profile of America's Finest Vocational Programs Serving People with Disabilities

- ★ Community-Based Work Adjustment
- ★ Consortium-Based Transition
- ★ Supported Work in Small Communities
- ★ Work Services for the Severely Disabled

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From The President

Dear Colleague:

The J. M. Foundation **Search for Excellence** has "proven" what many of us knew all along, there are many excellent vocational programs across the country that provide cost-effective services to people with disabling conditions. However, there are vast differences in program quality. As we reported in last year's Monograph, exemplary programs are not just slightly better than others. Depending on the measure used, the top one-third ranked vocational programs are from **three** to **eight** times better than the lowest one-third.

Learning From the Best, our description of winners and finalists in the 1987 **Search**, is a tribute to the people who provide vocational services to persons with disabilities. Exemplary programs are no accident, they are created by goal-oriented vocational professionals who share a common vision and a concern for excellence.

Facilities that fail to measure the quality of their work are like Alice in Lewis Carroll's famous *Wonderland*:

> ***"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" asked Alice.***
> ***"That depends a good deal on where you want to go," said the Cat.***
> ***"I don't much care where," said Alice.***
> ***"Then it doesn't matter much which way you go," said the Cat.***

I urge you to contact the programs which are profiled on the following pages. More than ever before, those who serve persons with disabilities must understand what excellence is and commit themselves to achieving it. Join us in our **Search** – adopt your own "Agenda for Excellence" to improve program productivity and increase benefits for clients!

With kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Milbank, Jr.
President
The J. M. Foundation
July 27, 1988

Acknowledgements

The J.M. Foundation would like to recognize the following organizations and individuals who contributed so substantially to the second national Search for Excellence in Vocational Programs. Their assistance was invaluable and without their help, the 1987 Search would not have succeeded.

Members of the National Advisory Committee that set policies and contributed many ideas to this year's awards program were:

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities;
Alan Toppel, Executive Director

Goodwill Industries of America;
David Cooney, President

ICD-International Center for the Disabled;
John Wingate, Executive Director

Iowa Association of Rehabilitation and Residential Facilities;
Sharon Geers Wulf, Executive Director

The J. M. Foundation;
Jack Brauntuch, Executive Director

National Association of Jewish Vocational Services;
Harvey Goldman, Executive Director

National Association of Rehabilitation Facilities;
James Ansley, Deputy Executive Director

The National Easter Seal Society;
James Williams, Deputy Executive Director

Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission;
Terry Etling, Assistant Commissioner

Rehabilitation Services Administration;
Justin Dart, Commissioner

United Cerebral Palsy Association;
John Siepp, Director of Training and Development

A distinguished panel of judges headed by Jeremiah Milbank, Jr., President of The J.M. Foundation, carefully reviewed each of the finalists and selected the award winners. The panel members for the 1987 Search include:

Professor Douglas A. Fenderson,
University of Minnesota Medical School;

Paul G. Hearne, Executive Director,
Just One Break, Inc.;

Edward J. O'Malley, Personnel Director,
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey;

Roger D. Semerad, Assistant Secretary of Labor,
U.S. Department of Labor

The J. M. Foundation also wishes to extend its appreciation to Robert A. Walker and Gary Prazak of Walker and Associates, Inc., our consultants who developed the 1987 Search process including technical materials and data processing systems. Along with Chris Olander, Senior Program Officer at the Foundation, they are the authors of this publication. Finally, we would like to thank the many dedicated rehabilitation professionals throughout the country who prepared and submitted applications for the Search. Because of their interest and commitment to excellence, The J. M. Foundation Directors have renewed the Awards for a third year in 1988.

Jeremiah Milbank, Jr. (L), President of The J.M. Foundation, greets Senator Bob Dole, who presented Search awards to the winners and finalists.

History and Description of the Search for Excellence

The 1987 Awards for Excellence in Vocational Programs was based on extensive study, national consultation and field trials that began in 1982 after The J.M. Foundation Directors agreed to test whether a national "Search for Excellence" would improve the economic lives of persons with disabilities. These six years of experience have helped to identify several important attributes of a quality Search process:

- Rather than assess excellence by relying on subjective opinions of how well services are provided, a Search for Excellence should focus on objective measures that determine the ability of a program to achieve benefits for the clients it serves.
- Since resources to serve persons with disabilities are limited, a Search should identify programs that are highly productive and have achieved client benefits at a reasonable cost.
- Every vocational rehabilitation organization should have an equal opportunity to be recognized for excellence regardless of local circumstances that can affect excellence. An applicant's chances for winning an award should not be reduced by such factors as a commitment to serve persons with severe disabilities, local conditions such as high unemployment rates or location in small communities.

The 1987 Search began with the development of policies and strategies set by the project's National Advisory Committee (members are listed in the Acknowledgement section). The program descriptions, Search materials, selection, application and screening procedures, and data processing methods were designed by Walker and Associates, Inc. of Minneapolis, with coordination by J. M. Foundation staff. The monograph describing award winners was also the joint responsibility of Walker and Associates and The J. M. Foundation. A brief description of the 1987 Search process follows.

The four program categories selected for the 1987 Search were discussed and approved by the National Advisory Committee, based on suggestions from many sources.

An extensive effort was made to use mailing lists of organizations that were known to provide services in one or more of the four program categories. Over 7000 announcements and applications were mailed to potential applicants.

Staff of Walker and Associates designed the application materials and reviewed each of the submitted applications for program eligibility and completeness. In 1987 a total of 154 applications were received. Applicants meeting the eligibility criteria had their application data entered into a computer.

Each application was assessed using measures of client benefits and program productivity. Three to eight measures were used, depending on the program category. Using a unique computer program to assign point values to the measures of benefits and program productivity, the relative levels of performance on each of the measures were combined so that each applicant had a single weighted score representing overall excellence. This score was then adjusted to account for local conditions such as the severity of clients served and unemployment rate.

An award created especially for the 1987 Search was presented to each of the four winning programs.

U.S. Senator Bob Dole congratulates representatives from 1987 award winners and other special guests (L-R) Ted Fabyan, Vocational Guidance Services; Jackie Strange, The Dole Foundation for Employment of People with Disabilities; Larry Buboltz, Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.; Jeremiah Milbank and Jack Brauntuch, The J.M. Foundation; Senator Bob Dole; Patty Morgan, Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.; Peter Hoke, Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs, Inc.

All applicants in each program category were then rank ordered according to their adjusted overall excellence scores. Those at the top of the list were contacted by Walker and Associates to verify the accuracy of the information provided in the applications. If the data was found to be valid, contacts were then made with local representatives such as funders, advocates, and peers to determine the applicant's local reputation as a quality provider of vocational programs. Following this, the top three applicants in each award category were asked to supply additional materials to supplement their application data.

Information on each finalist was then reviewed by a panel of distinguished judges (see Acknowledgements). The information consisted of data from the application form, detailed program budget/expense data, information from telephone contacts with people in the community, and descriptive narratives provided by each finalist. The meeting was chaired by Jeremiah Milbank, Jr., President of The J. M. Foundation and resulted in the selection of winners and finalists for each program category.

An award ceremony for all winners and finalists was held in Washington, D.C. on December 10, 1987. The awards were presented by U. S. Senator Bob Dole before an audience of over 100 persons representing some 50 major organizations. The four winners were given a $20,000 J. M. Foundation check and both winners and finalists were presented with awards designed especially for the Search for Excellence.

Site visits were then made to each of the winners to gather additional information which is presented in this monograph along with descriptions of the other finalists.

Each applicant in the 1987 Search was sent an Excellence Report that compared their organization's overall level of excellence and their performance on several key measures to all other applicants in their respective program category. Typical responses of applicants to this "report card" included: "Interesting to see how we stack up against others across the country;" "We are looking forward to participating in future Searches and seeing our percentile scores;" and "Our intent is to use the information contained in the report to spur us to think about how we can make our program better."

Community-Based Work Adjustment

WINNER

Vocational Guidance Services
Cleveland, Ohio

FINALISTS

Goodwill Industries of Kentucky
Louisville, Kentucky

Goodwill Industries of New Jersey
Harrison, New Jersey

Introduction

Community-based work adjustment is a relatively new concept among rehabilitation facilities. Such programs are time-limited, providing work experience and counseling services at community work sites to assist persons with poor work habits, motivational problems, and low productivity. The ultimate goal is placement in competitive employment. Community-based work adjustment is somewhat similar to supported employment and on-the-job training which also prepare clients for competitive employment at competitive work sites. However, in community-based work adjustment programs, the work site employer is not necessarily expected to hire successful clients as employees.

Typically, several clients rotate through the same job at a work site during the period of a year. In some programs the sponsoring organization takes on all or part of the responsibility of initial orientation, training, and on-going supervision of clients at the work site. In other programs the employer's role is the same as with any new employee.

Three measures of benefits to clients and two measures of program productivity were used to determine the level of program excellence among applicants in this category. The client benefit measures were: (a) the percentage of clients obtaining competitive employment, (b) average weekly earnings for competitively employed clients, and (c) the total percentage of clients obtaining either competitive employment, occupational skill training, or supported employment. The measures of program productivity were: (a) average program length based on the average number of days clients are in the program, and (b) average cost per person served during the past year.

Because of their effect on program performance, two additional factors were included in the assessment process; (1) the severity of clients served, and (2) the area unemployment rate. In effect, each applicant's overall performance score was adjusted by these modifiers. The table which follows lists the five measures and the two modifiers used and the relative weights or values assigned to each.

How Excellence Was Measured

Measures	Weighted Values Categories	Measures
1. *Benefits to Clients*	65%	
a. Percent obtaining competitive employment		70%
b. Average weekly earnings in competitive employment		10%
c. Percent obtaining competitive or supported employment, or occupational skill training		20%
		100%
2. *Productivity*	25%	
a. Average number of program days		70%
b. Average cost per person served		30%
		100%
3. *Modifiers*	10%	
a. Client severity, average number of severe conditions		70%
b. Unemployment rate, calendar year 1986		30%
	100%	100%

A total of 29 applications were received from facilities in 17 states. Three were determined to be ineligible leaving 26 programs which served over 1,000 clients a year. The typical community-based work adjustment program can be described by the following median values:

- 15 clients are served each day
- Programs have 3.1 full time equivalent direct service staff
- Clients are in the program an average of 88 days, or about 18 weeks
- 53% of all clients served obtained competitive employment and an additional 4% are placed in supported employment or receive occupational skill training
- Clients placed on competitive jobs earn $146 per week
- Annual program expenses total $76,000
- The program cost per person served is $2,900
- Average cost per person obtaining employment is $5,660

WINNER

Vocational Guidance Services
Cleveland, Ohio

The Projects with Industry Program of Vocational Guidance Services (VGS) is the 1987 winner in the category of Community-Based Work Adjustment. It is a well-established program which first began operating over 15 years ago. Its high level of performance – excellent results at a reasonable cost – clearly demonstrates the advantages of providing work adjustment on community work sites to improve the employability of persons with disabling conditions.

The Community and Vocational Guidance Services

Vocational Guidance Services serves persons with disabilities in one of the nation's larger metropolitan areas. Cuyahoga County, which includes the city of Cleveland, has a population of about two million. In the past, employment in Cleveland was based predominantly on manufacturing. However, in recent years, there have been two trends that have affected the kinds of jobs available to person ith disabling conditions. First, as in many urban areas, manufacturers have closed, relocated out of the area altogether, or moved to the suburbs. This has not only reduced the total number of jobs, but has limited access by public transportation to the remaining jobs. Second, while there are few opportunities in manufacturing, there are more positions in the service industry. Consequently, most VGS clients now are placed in food service, custodial, housekeeping, and clerical jobs. The area's unemployment rate in 1986 was 7.4%, somewhat higher than the 6.4% median for all applicants in this program category.

VGS is one of the oldest and largest rehabilitation facilities in the nation. Its roots go back to 1890 when it was started by a group of volunteers to serve "crippled" children. Today, almost 9,000 persons a year participate in one or more of its many programs. Approximately 900 persons are served each day by 150 staff at 13 locations in the Cleveland and Northeastern Ohio area. The annual budget in 1986 was $8.3 million. In addition to the Projects with Industry community-based work adjustment program, other services include vocational evaluation, facility-based work adjustment, skill training, job development, and job placement. In 1987 VGS placed over 2,000 people into competitive employment. It also operates an activity services program for persons with severe mental retardation and a Community Center for the elderly.

The two largest sources of income for VGS are the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and the state vocational rehabilitation agency, the Ohio Rehabilitation Service Commission. All VGS vocational programs such as Projects with Industry are guided by VGS Trustees and, in particular, by the Business Advisory Council. The Council is made up of representatives of 46 employers in the Greater Cleveland area. They provide invaluable assistance with such issues as: "What are the most appropriate job areas for VGS to provide occupational skill training?" "Should VGS take over a nearby prime manufacturing business?" "How can VGS access more competitive employment opportunities for clients?" "Who can provide sub-contracts for the work services program?"

VGS work adjustment clients receive real work experience at a variety of community sites such as a major Cleveland utility company.

"Projects with Industry," the Award-Winning Community-Based Work Adjustment Program

Since it started in 1972, the community-based work adjustment program of Vocational Guidance Services has been known as the Projects with Industry Program. Significantly, it was one of the first three Federally funded PWI programs designed to involve business and industry directly in the process of rehabilitation. As a result of training and individual consultation provided by VGS staff, it has been replicated in several other Ohio communities.

The PWI program has a staff of three persons providing direct services including two counselors and a placement specialist. Approximately 60 persons are served each year. Expenses for the program totalled about $68,000 in 1986, not including $163,000 in wages paid to participating clients. The program can accommodate 19 clients at a time and currently operates with three different Cleveland area employers. The specific job sites available and the number of clients that can be accommodated at each site at any one time are shown below:

A large urban hospital, seven clients served
- housekeeping
- cafeteria service in a variety of jobs
- maintenance/custodial

A manufacturer of communications antennas, seven positions available, four clients currently served (this employer has been involved in the program since 1974).

- hand assembly of small parts
- packaging
- machine operation
- mail room
- drafting
- quality control, inspection
- material handling

A large utility company serving Northeast Ohio, nine positions available, eight clients currently served.

- custodial
- building maintenance
- garage attendant
- payroll clerk
- computer programmer
- customer service representative
- clerk-typist
- file clerk
- data entry clerk

Work sites are selected to reflect the types of jobs available in the community that would be appropriate for the skills and abilities of potential clients. The most common sites for community based work adjustment placements are service jobs, especially food service and janitorial. To provide a wide range of work, VGS has always included manufacturing and clerical job opportunities in addition to the service-oriented work sites. Clients in the program have various primary and secondary disabling conditions. Over half have mental illness, a third have a variety of physical, medical, and perceptual limitations, one in six have mental retardation, and one in four have substance abuse problems. Most have very little work experience and limited education in addition to signficant work behavior problems.

Clients are carefully matched to work sites consistent with their abilities and disabilities. This individual is soldering intricate circuit boards used in communication antennas.

Clients may be referred directly by the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired, or the Veterans Administration. However, most have completed a vocational evaluation program either at VGS or another rehabilitation facility. Clients are assigned to specific work sites and jobs that are consistent with their abilities, interests, and goals. The program is scheduled for a 12 week period which may be extended as needed. Job orientation is provided by the employer, just as it is for other employees.

Program staff provide daily ongoing support services to help with problems that interfere with getting or keeping a job. Services include counseling, help with transportation, and referral to other community services, such as mental health agencies, the Welfare Department, and Alcoholics Anonymous. Staff give special attention to each client's individual work behaviors. Problems are identified and client progress is monitored daily using a "behavioral contract." The contract, which is negotiated and signed by the work supervisor, client, and VGS staff person, specifies the work behaviors that must be corrected if the client is to remain in the program. For example, "John will be not be late for work more than once every two weeks." Clients who show employment potential by demonstrating appropriate work behaviors and a reasonable level of productivity begin receiving job placement services after ten weeks in the program.

Regular employees working beside program clients serve as role models for appropriate productivity and work habits. It is not unusual for a co-worker to take a client "under his or her wing," providing information, guidance, and encouragement. Co-workers are often instrumental in improving the quality and quantity of work produced by program clients and also influence behaviors related to grooming, social interaction on the job, and attendance.

Clients are expected to work the same hours as other employees (generally 40 hours a week) and are paid according to their productivity while in the program. For example, if a client is producing at 75% of regular new workers, that person is paid 75% of the beginning wage. All clients, however, earn at least minimum wage. It is possible that the wage rate may change several times during the 12 week program. Linking pay to productivity helps reinforce positive changes in productivity and work habits. VGS handles client payroll and bills the participating employers for gross wages paid. Significantly, Projects with Industry has had no problems with unions or other employees accepting program clients.

"A significant benefit of this program has been that it has has helped many employers in the Cleveland area to change their attitudes and hiring practices toward persons with disabilities."

Over the years, a substantial number of clients have been hired by work site employers after they see how productive and adaptable a client is on the job. Work site supervisors are also excellent references for clients seeking work. Based on their experience, supervisors can provide first hand information about productivity and dependability. Clients seeking employment elsewhere in the community have an advantage over other job applicants because of their work experience with well-known companies. In addition, clients with no work history or poor work records gain confidence in their ability to make it on a real job.

A significant benefit of this program has been that it has helped many employers in the Cleveland area to change their attitudes and hiring practices toward persons with disabilities. Because of their positive experiences, employers see persons with disabilities as successful workers and VGS is perceived as a good resource for finding such people. All VGS clients benefit from this cooperative relationship with area employers.

The Projects with Industry program has proven to be highly effective and efficient. In a recent 18 month period, 66% of the clients served obtained permanent competitive employment. This compares to the median for all Search applicants in this category of 53%. PWI clients were placed at jobs paying an average of $182 per week, compared to $146 for all applicants. The outstanding cost-effectiveness can be summarized by the cost to get one client into competitive employment. It cost VGS less than $1,600 compared to a median cost of $5,600 in other programs. This was the lowest "cost per success" of all applicants.

Judy Kobick, VGS on-site counselor, compliments a client on his job performance during a custodial assignment.

While working in the food service of a major hospital, PWI clients prepare for competitive employment and earn wages based on their productivity.

On Excellence

There are several features that contribute to the success of Vocational Guidance Services and its Projects with Industry Program, such as:

★ Program staff are well experienced. Staff that work directly with clients average over six years in this program in addition to experience on other jobs within VGS. The person who started the PWI program over 15 years ago now serves as its administrator. The staff demonstrate enthusiasm, competence, and commitment which is contagious to both clients and employers.

★ Participating employers have also been involved with the program for substantial periods of time, ranging from four to fourteen years. The stability of key staff and employers has resulted in a close, mutually beneficial working relationship. Several supervisors from private employers have each worked with a number of clients over the years. They voluntarily report how satisfying the experience has been, citing examples of major gains made by clients they have supervised. Clearly, they are proud of clients who have obtained regular permanent employment. Significantly, the top administrators of all three sponsoring companies are strongly committed to the program. Participation is seen as good for business as well as good for the community.

★ The wide variety of jobs available for work adjustment also contributes to its success. The jobs cluster in the three areas – clerical, service, and manufacturing – and cover an extensive range of requirements in physical strength, dexterity, endurance, work speed, attention to detail, interaction with other workers, and learning capacity. The emphasis in this program is clearly one of finding the best job site for a particular client rather than seeking potential clients to fit into available job slots. If one work site assignment doesn't work out as planned, that client is reassigned to another site or modifications are made to the job.

★ The positive experience of PWI community work sites is now being replicated in other VGS programs where such work experience is a useful service component. Programs for occupational skill training, clerical/word processing, and customer service representatives now have clients spend part of their training time at worksites in the community. Trainees get positive reinforcement for acquiring specific job skills and also learn how other employees function in the real world.

For further information on this winning program, contact:

William Boswell, Vice President,
or
Nancy Kuepper, Resource Specialist
Vocational Guidance Services
2239 East 55th Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44103
Telephone: (216) 431-7800

FINALISTS

Community-Based Work Adjustment

Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, Inc.
Louisville, Kentucky

With a total annual budget of approximately $600,000, Kentucky Goodwill is one of the smallest organizations that applied in the 1987 Search category of Community-Based Work Adjustment. Despite its modest size, the agency also provides vocational evaluation, work services, and a facility-based work adjustment program.

Goodwill clients have an opportunity for a wide variety of jobs, such as fork lift operation, shown above.

The "Work Adjustment Work Site" Program began about three years ago. It is a small program with a full-time staff of just one person, a daily capacity of seven clients, and several employers as work sites. During a recent one month period, six different employer sites were used. The jobs at these sites included: maintenance/janitorial work, restaurant hostess, cooks helper, and data entry clerk. The most common disabling conditions of the clients served in this program are mental illness and various physical disabilities. Clients are well-integrated with non-disabled employees. Since the program started, half the work sites have had only one client while the other half have had two to four clients at one time or another. The time clients spend in the program is variable. Although it can be extended, the usual maximum is 13 weeks.

A work adjustment client learns good work habits by microfilming documents for a local company.

The program, though small, has had significant success. During a recent 18-month period, 80 percent of the clients served (24 out of 30) obtained competitive employment. This is one of the highest success rates of all Search applicants in this category. Most of these were hired by the work site employer. The average cost per person obtaining competitive employment, about $2,300, is less than half that of the average applicant. Staff attribute program success to the real work settings used and the impact of these environments on client productivity and work habits. They believe that working at these sites stimulates improvements more quickly than working in facility-based programs. Finally, clients have a longer period of time to learn specific job skills and to improve work habits and productivity than is usually possible in ordinary job placements.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
Marsha Berry, Human Services Manager,
or
Lisa Frantz, Rehabilitation Specialist
Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, Inc.
214 South 8th Street
Louisville, KY 40202
Telephone: (502) 585-5221

Goodwill Industries of New Jersey, Inc.
Harrison, New Jersey

Goodwill Industries of New Jersey is located in the Newark metropolitan area which has a higher unemployment rate than the average Search applicant. Its annual budget is about $1.6 million. Referral sources indicate that, in addition to the work adjustment program, Goodwill also provides especially effective vocational evaluation, on-the-job training, and job placement services.

Marriott Corporation restaurants and gift shops provide excellent work sites for Goodwill's Work Stations in Industry program.

Goodwill clients earn up to $4.50 per hour while developing good work habits.

Goodwill's community-based work adjustment program is called "Work Stations in Industry" and has been in operation about three years. It is a smaller than average program, serving up to ten clients at any one time. Two work sites, which include three restaurants and a gift shop, are made available by a major national hotel and restaurant corporation . Clients can be placed in eleven different jobs at these sites for varying lengths of time, usually one to three months but occasionally as long as six months. They are matched to a specific job based on their ability and interests which are determined during a Goodwill vocational evaluation. The jobs include food preparation, building maintenance, cashier, dishwashing, and gift shop attendant. Clients acquire job skills at the same time they are working to improve their work habits. No commitment is made by the employer to hire clients. Goodwill pays each individual at a rate which reflects their productivity while in the program, which can be as high as $4.50 per hour.

The program is staffed by several people who also have other duties including a coordinator, two work adjustment counselors who do most of the on-site work with program clients, a driver who transports clients to the work sites, and a placement specialist. Together they total about one and a third full-time equivalent staff.

Clients in the program have a variety of disabling conditions, including mental illness, cerebral palsy, and hearing and visual impairments. Most have multiple physical, mental and other problems in addition to major deficits in work habits at the time they enter the program. About half enter Work Stations in Industry shortly after completing high school special education.

The program has been very successful, placing 77% of all clients into competitive employment at an average wage of $160 per week. Many are hired and placed at a number of area restaurants owned and operated by the host company.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

Debra Balady, Director of Rehabilitation,
or
Alicia Kupchik, Clinical Coordinator
Goodwill Industries of New Jersey, Inc.
400 Worthington Avenue
Harrison, NJ 07029
Telephone: (201) 481-2300

Findings and Observations: Community-Based Work Adjustment

This section is based on interviews with community based work adjustment providers and funders, a review of application data and descriptions submitted to the Search, and on-site visits with program staff, participating employers, and representatives of community agencies.

How do the community-based work adjustment programs this year compare to the facility-based programs in the 1986 Search?

The table below compares the two types of work adjustment programs on several measures. The data shown are median values.

A Comparison of Two Work Adjustment Models

Measure	Community-based	Facility-based
1. Percent of clients placed into competitive employment	69%	23%
2. Weekly earnings on job	$146	$134
3. Cost per client served	$2,919	$2,104
4. Cost per client placed into competitive employment	$3,660	$11,570

Community-based work adjustment programs place clients into competitive employment at *over twice* the rate of facility-based programs. About a fourth of this year's community-based programs placed at least three of every four clients into competitive employment. Clients also earn more on jobs following community-based programs. While the median cost per client served is somewhat higher for the community-based programs, the cost per client placed into competitive employment is about half that of the facility-based programs. Some of these differences, however, may be due to the facility-based programs serving somewhat more severely disabled persons.

What are the differences in program design that account for the higher rates of success in community-based vs. facility-based work adjustment programs?

Use of a real work site in the community seems to positively change client behavior faster than workshop-based programs. Facility-based program clients are often surrounded by people who are not very productive and who are tolerated despite behaviors that are unacceptable in most competitive work settings. In effect, community-based programs enlist the help of supervisors and fellow workers to supplement the work of program staff and help clients become employable.

There is considerable variation in how CBWA programs are conducted. What features appear to characterize the most effective programs?

First, there is a variety of job sites to accommodate a wide range of client needs and interests. The best programs use several different employers and work sites. Clients can improve their productivity and develop appropriate work habits when placed on a job that takes advantage of their individual capacities and interests. If every client does janitorial work while in the work adjustment program, the transition to a competitive job will be more difficult for those who are neither interested in nor capable of being successful janitors.

Second, agreements are forged with employers that allow programs to bring in clients with significant work habit problems and limited productivity. Any program can look successful if it screens clients carefully enough, admitting only those who are eager to work, almost job-ready, and who primarily need work experience to build self-confidence and confirm employability.

Finally, employers are not expected to hire every client who does well in the program. While there is nothing wrong with having a trial work period before a hiring decision is made, such programs are providing job placement rather than work adjustment. The best work adjustment programs have used the same employers for several years. Such employers are willing to accept a number of clients who need more time and patience to become employable.

Consortium-Based Transition

WINNER

Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

FINALIST

ICD-International Center For The Disabled
New York, New York

Introduction

Because of the special difficulties faced by disabled young people in securing jobs after their high school years, the 1987 Search for Excellence focused on school-to-work transition programs which served youth with handicapping conditions. Eligible programs were expected to provide a comprehensive range of employability development services for the purpose of helping each youth obtain a job in a competitive setting. To encourage greater cooperation among community agencies, preference was given to applicants who were involved in an organized consortium of provider organizations that initiated employment services before the youth left high school.

Anthony Fisher prepares for the transition from school to employment by working as a kitchen aide at the Little Falls Middle School.

Three performance measures were used to calculate a single excellence score for each applicant's transition program. The three measures assessed benefits to clients by evaluating job entry rates as well as the percentage of all youths who either obtained a job or entered sheltered work, supported work, or an employability development program. For youth who obtained competitive employment, average weekly earnings were also measured. Productivity measures used in other Search categories such as inputs of service dollars or staff time related to client services received, were not used because of problems in obtaining accurate and comparable data. The three client benefit measures were weighted and combined into a single excellence score and adjusted by two other factors: the level of client severity and local unemployment rates. A total of 17 applications were received providing information on almost 1500 youth in the transition from school to work.

How Excellence Was Measured

Measures	Weighted Values
1. ***Benefits to Clients***	
a. Job entry rate	48%
b. Percent in competitive employment, supported work, sheltered work or employability development.	6%
c. Average weekly earnings	6%
2. ***Productivity Measures (N/A)***	0%
3. ***Modifiers***	
a. Client severity	36%
b. Area unemployment rate	4%
	100%

WINNER

Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

The 1987 award winning consortium-based transition program is provided in a most unlikely setting: North Central Minnesota – where winter wind chills commonly exceed 40 below zero, the labor market consists largely of "low-pay summer jobs," the five county geographic service area covers over 5,600 square miles, and each student served is simultaneously registered as an official client of three diverse organizations. Program management is made even more difficult by the operating practices of 13 separate school districts and a requirement which stipulates that the parents of each student must actively participate in the planning and implementation of transition services.

Eric Kenning, a high school senior who works as an activity aide, helps enhance the quality of life for senior citizens in a local nursing home.

The Community and Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.

The host organization for this year's award winning program is Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program, Inc., a Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) employment and training agency which has provided a broad array of manpower services since 1968. Unlike most JTPA providers, Rural Minnesota CEP is not a unit of government but a voluntary, not-for-profit provider serving a 19-county, 22,000-square-mile area which has a population of more than 400,000 including three Native American reservations. Located in Northern Minnesota, CEP operates in an area that has a relatively high poverty rate (15 to 20 percent) with a chronically depressed rural economy which relies heavily on tourism, small businesses, and agriculture. The labor market is highly seasonal and unemployment generally runs between six and eight percent.

With an annual budget of more then eleven million dollars, Rural Minnesota CEP operates approximately 20 employment and training programs. A yearly total of 8,000 persons are served in programs designed for displaced workers, AFDC recipients, housewives of farmers enrolled in retraining, older workers, unemployed persons, and others who have employment difficulties. The agency employs a professional staff of more than 90 persons who work in teams assigned to nine separate offices. Each of these work sites has a team leader and a team consisting of staff such as counselors, job developers, job search counselors, and other vocational professionals. Major JTPA services include career planning and counseling, job seeking skills, and job placement as well as classroom and on-the-job skill training.

Minnesota CEP has developed a well-deserved state and local reputation as a fast-moving, highly responsive, results-focused organization. It is viewed by professional peers as a high quality, imaginative provider of employment services that has earned, as one state official put it, "a wall full of awards." Further testimony to CEP's excellence is found in a written evaluation made by a state educational consultant, "This program appears to be operating exceptionally well. Coordination between the schools, Rural Minnesota CEP and DRS (Division of Rehabilitation Services) is at a high level and operates in an efficient manner." Of equal importance are unsolicited comments such as these from the mother of a transition program participant, "You should know what this program has done for us...Our daughter would not be in school today if it were not for your help. Her job has given her a more adult outlook on life and a feeling that she is earning her own way."

The Winning School-To-Work Transition Program

The 1987 award winning transition program has a yearly budget of $65,000 and is designed to annually serve 50 youth with disabilities. At the time they are admitted, these young people have no viable plan for what they will do following graduation. Services begin toward the end of the students' junior year and are provided over a 14 to 18-month period. Suprisingly, the program is sparsely staffed with a three-quarter-time person who functions as a coordinator/advocate and several part-time staff who are called in as needed to provide specialized services. In spite of this, each participating youth has access to a wide array of services which are provided by an impressive group of professionals from the public and private sectors. Despite the severe disabling conditions of the persons served, the shortcomings of a rural and dispersed service delivery area, and the limitations of a marginal labor market, *more than 60 percent of those who start the program obtain competitive employment or some other major program benefit.*

The school-to-work transition program started with the grass roots observations of key community leaders from CEP, state vocational rehabilitation, and special education who determined that youth with disabilities were not well prepared for entry into the labor market following high school graduation. Furthermore, it was felt the barriers to job entry were substantial and clients would require more services than could be provided by a single organization. Thus, the group decided to test a pilot program at three different sites. Following a one year trial period, the initiative was judged to be a success and the current program began to serve youth with disabilities in July, 1986.

The organizations collaborating in this award winning transition program have many diverse roles, such as:

School-To-Work Transition Staff: Program staff are employees of CEP who have two major functions. The first is to act as a facilitator by providing coordination/advocacy services for each client while the second is to directly provide a variety of employability development services through the use of several part-time staff. In effect, the annual program plan was to serve 60 persons with a full-time equivalent staff of just 1.05 persons.

JTPA Employment and Training Agency: In addition to serving as host organization for the School-To-Work Transition Program, Rural Minnesota CEP is also an active service provider. CEP has, for example, developed a planned sequence of employability development materials that are used by transition students to establish job goals, acquire job search skills, etc. The agency also assumes case responsibility for each student after the completion of transition program services.

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency: The Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) officially enrolls all transition clients and provides a number of direct services such as counseling and job development. DRS also lends its very considerable talents in disability assessment and job restructuring. If needed, the State VR agency can also purchase community services such as supported employment or skill training and provide ready access for transition clients to be served in the DRS operated vocational evaluation facility.

Special Education: The focal point of this program is within the school since most of the transition services are provided while youth are still enrolled in their junior and senior years. The 13 schools are responsible for referring students to the program, making scholastic assessments, providing school-based employment services, developing and monitoring work sites, and providing feedback regarding client progress to other professionals who are also serving the youth.

Vocational Education: Minnesota has an enviable vocational education system which has attracted national attention. About one-third of the transition clients receive vocational education services in the form of special needs vocational training courses in job areas such as janitorial and food service.

Other Providers: Private, voluntary rehabilitation facilities provide contract services such as sheltered employment, supported employment, and job placement. Alternative special education programs are also available for those students who have severe behavior problems. When needed, county social service staff provide casework and support services to program clients and their families.

Youth with disabilities are selected from students who have just completed their junior year in high school and can participate in a summer experience prior to starting their senior year. Each student accepted for services must: (1) meet the JTPA definition of "handicapped;" (2) be found eligible by DRS; (3) have potential for unsubsidized employment; and (4) have no specific career plans. Transition clients are typically 17 years of age and have physical disabilities or moderate to mild mental retardation. Nearly everyone referred to the program is accepted for services.

Each student's program begins with the first of three scheduled meetings involving the client, his or her family, and three team members consisting of a counselor from DRS, a work experience coordinator or a special education instructor from the school, and the coordinator advocate from Rural Minnesota CEP. The involvement of parents and the direct participation of the student is of critical importance in this first meeting to provide valuable input on problems to be solved and aspirations to be realized. In addition, both students and parents are active participants in developing the plan of service.

At the planning session, information is shared, problems are identified, goals are established and an Employability Development Plan (EDP) is written. The EDP describes specific objectives for accomplishment, records services to be provided, assigns tasks for purposes of accountability, and lists deadlines to facilitate the timely achievement of goals. Significantly, CEP holds itself responsible and accountable to see that goals are achieved, regardless of who provides the service.

Patti Ellestad (R) learns more about clerical and office work with the help of her supervisor, Wendy Adamson.

Following the development of this initial plan, each student participates in a CEP-designed service module called the Career Planning System (CPS) through which the individual identifies his or her job goal. The service is provided in small groups and systematically guides the students through a planned three-day curriculum on topics such as decisionmaking, values, goal-setting, aptitude and abilities, and career areas. In addition to the more work-focused topics, discussions are also held on subjects such as assertiveness and self-confidence. The major themes of CPS are that each person is in control of his or her own destiny and that objective information can be used to make important life and career decisions.

Utilizing the Career Planning System, each student is placed in a closely supervised summer job for up to 300 hours at $3.35 per hour. Wages are paid through a special state fund for disadvantaged youth. Most work sites are in public sector organizations and each work experience must be compatible with a student's individual development plan. Meaningful work sites are not easy to find in rural Minnesota, yet program staff are not at all reluctant to drop sites which do not benefit their clients.

The major purpose of the summer job is to help each student acquire what CEP refers to as "Youth Employability Competencies." The competencies are a listing of eleven critical employment traits and behaviors which are essential to getting and keeping a job. These include: completing a job application, interviewing skills, attendance, punctuality, and getting along with others in the workplace. The importance of quality work is emphasized throughout the entire program. Performance and development are evaluated by tests and observations before, during, and after each summer experience. In addition to acquiring competencies, the work sites help students acquire significant work skills and generally reinforce their commitment to the working world.

At the end of the summer work experience, the planning team meets for a second session to evaluate the student's progress. Team members review the student's observed competencies and EDP summer goal achievement and identify those problems still to be resolved. In cooperation with the youth and parent(s), a second "Employability Plan" is developed. Most students also participate in a local diagnostic center program administered by DRS. In this simulated work setting, work samples provide the planning team with further information concerning job goals, work behaviors and levels of productivity. This well-designed and fast-paced program takes only 4 days for each transition participant.

During the last year of high school, transition students work up to ten hours a week and attend daily sessions at the school on a variety of work and job focused topics. This worksite experience is coordinated by transition program staff who also evaluate each student's progress on work competencies. Shortly before the end of the senior year, the planning team meets for the third and final time. Together they decide whether the student has acquired all the necessary work competencies and what needs to be done next. Based on this assessment, the final EDP will reflect any additional services required by the student, such as:

- Job-ready clients are taught how to seek work independently. A 30 hour curriculum is followed which relies on support groups and covers topics such as networking, interviewing, and completing job applications. Videotapes, supervised phone contacts, and graduation certificates (complete with a formal ceremony), are several features of this well organized sequence.
- Students who have not achieved all of the Youth Employability Competencies have several options. They may repeat services at another work site or participate in a work adjustment service, sheltered workshop, or a community-based supported employment program.
- Students with specific job skill deficiencies can receive classroom or on-the-job occupational skill training, state administered vocational education courses, or private training programs purchased through the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

"The major themes of CPS are that each person is in control of his or her own destiny and that objective information can be used to make important life and career decisions."

Some School-To-Work Transition students officially leave the program in June when they graduate from high school and obtain a job. However, most clients are served beyond graduation so they are assured of receiving any necessary vocational programs such as skill training or work adjustment. Students requiring additional services remain with CEP which, along with DRS, will provide or arrange for whatever services are necessary to complete the transition to employment. Continuity between the Transition project and other programs is facilitated by the coordinator/advocate who ensures that the needs of each student will be met.

Community Responses

Program staff and representatives of other organizations involved in the transition program were asked to share their opinions regarding transition services. Their observations are summarized below:

- Respondents felt that most, if not every community has all of the basic services needed to operate a transition program but that the major task is *putting together what already exists into a coordinated network*. It was recognized that an organized consortium is not easy to achieve, especially when participants do not know each other and the community does not have a history of cooperation.

- Services need to begin *before* the student leaves school, although opinion varied as to just when the ideal transition program should start. Most participants believe that, *at a minimum*, vocational services which focus on the basics of getting and keeping a job should be provided during the student's last year in high school.

- Communities adopting a transition service based on coordination and advocacy should be aware that the personal skills of the advocate and the advocate's organizational affiliation are very important. Rather than having a public provider such as a school assigned the coordinator/advocacy function, community respondents believed a voluntary agency would be more appropriate, accommodating, and flexible.

- A candid assessment of the award-winning program by staff indicated that the current transition program ends too abruptly. Too often, students have not achieved all of the program goals at the time services are completed. Accordingly, it was recommended that transition services be lengthed by six months following graduation plus an additional three months for follow-up. Finally, current staff felt more sites should be developed in the private sector to expand the range of work opportunities.

On Excellence

A review of program data, expert opinions, and descriptive information shows that the CEP School-To-Work Transition Program has several characteristics associated with cost-effective services, including:

★ The goals – prepare students to get and hold jobs in unsubsidized employment – are clear and uncluttered. Significantly, staff are held accountable to achieve these goals.

★ The program focuses on hard to employ handicapped youth. Exemplary results have not be achieved by "creaming" students who could probably find work on their own.

CEP client Tim Liddle gains valuable experience and skills by working for the Brainerd Public Library.

★ Quality assurance is the responsibility of an advocate who represents the best interests of the client rather than those of the collaborating organizations. The advocate is not reluctant to raise embarrassing questions when necessary. The advocacy role, played by a carefully selected person within CEP, accounts for much of the program's success.

★ The transition program relies on a planned sequence of time-tested services which have proven successful in resolving client problems that pose barriers to getting a job. Smooth transfers between cooperating organizations are facilitated by the coordinator/advocate.

★ The costs of services are contained by creative use of the best, most cost-effective existing resources. Thus, start up costs are eliminated and services are not duplicated.

For further information on this winning program, contact:

George Peters, Director of Operations,
or
Robert Thomas, Center Manager
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.,
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Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
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FINALIST

Consortium-Based Transition

ICD-International Center for the Disabled
New York, New York

Founded in 1917, the ICD has a national and international reputation for serving the needs of persons with disabilities. In the first Search for Excellence, ICD was a finalist in the category of Occupational Skill Training.

The Center is located in New York City and offers a broad range of medical, social, behavioral, speech, hearing and vocational rehabiliation programs with an annual budget exceeding $10 million. As a full service provider, ICD has long been recognized during its 70-year history of distinguished service as a highly professional organization with superior expertise in serving persons with disabilities.

"Workways", the award-winning transition program, serves school-aged youth with disabilities in a 26 week program. The goal is to help each client obtain a job in an unsubsidized setting. Participating organizations include the State VR agency which provides referrals, medical examinations, psychological evaluations and funding; and the JTPA/Private Industry Council which offers funding and general program consultation. ICD is the primary provider in this transition program using a four-phase program of evaluation/assessment, work adjustment, transitional work experience, and job placement. Because of ICD's comprehensiveness, each youth has access to a full range of support and ancillary services. The four phases all have entry and completion criteria and the program goal is to achieve a minimum job entry rate of 50 percent.

John Wingate (L), Executive Director, reviews the Workways curriculum with Bernard Rosenberg, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation. ICD was a Search finalist in both 1986 and 1987.

Clients in ICD's Workways transition program receive individualized attention to help them prepare for employment after completing school.

Workways served a total of 40 persons during calender year 1986. The program has a budget of $98,000 and has nine part-time staff with a full-time equivalency of 1.60 persons. The program serves out-of-school youths who have disabling medical conditions and borderline mental retardation. Behavior problems are relatively common and 20 percent of the clients are identified as chronically mentally ill. Significantly, Workways placed 60 percent of all participants into competitive employment with average weekly earnings over $180.00.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

Bernard Rosenberg, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation,
or
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Findings and Observations: Consortium-Based Transition Programs

This section describes what has been learned about transition programs from the 1987 Search. Conclusions were drawn from interviews with many transition providers, reviews of Search applications and program descriptions, and conversations with funding sources, researchers, and entrants.

How successful are transition programs in getting students back to work?

Like most employment programs, success depends heavily upon how clients are selected. Programs which consistently serve students with tough problems, yet provide effective services, place about 30 percent into competitive employment. Public schools often cannot control who they serve so their success rates will be somewhat less than community-based facilities who can be more selective about whom they serve. Job entry rates, by themselves, are not a good indicator of program excellence since even a poor quality transition program can succeed at a 60 percent entry rate by screening out hard to serve youth.

Is there a single "transition model?"

"Transition" is a program concept based on a need to serve youth in transition rather than a specific type of program. Search applicants submitted data on at least three general transition models. In the first, one organization such as a public school system provides all the vocational and support services obtained by a student. This self-contained model has limited involvement with community agencies.

A second model provides a limited range of services such as work experience and job placement to a carefully selected group of students. The provider of this work-focused model is often a rehabilitation facility who offers services that do not easily fit within a school environment.

The 1987 Search for Excellence winner, Rural Minnesota CEP, represents the third model; a collaborative/advocacy approach that layers coordinating functions within an existing service network. Multiple providers ensure that each student receives all needed services.

Who appear to be the key partners in a transition program?

The three most important agencies are:

- The special education portion of the school system which refers students and provides services before graduation or prior to a student "aging out;"
- A voluntary community organization such as a rehabilitation facility that typically provides coordination and work-based services;
- The state Vocational Rehabilitation program that provides direct services such as counseling and also purchases needed services from community organizations.

What services are found in transition programs?

The services vary somewhat depending on the transition model that is provided. For example, strongly work-focused programs most frequently provide work adjustment and job placement. Collaboration/advocacy are often quite comprehensive depending on the partners that are involved. School-based models provide the widest range of transition services because the programs often include academics, activities of daily living, and other community integration services. Although such services can be quite lengthy, it does not appear that transition programs are providing services that are much different from other job-focused programs. In general, experienced providers felt that the best transition programs should offer a wide range of services, start at the beginning of the junior year and offer a blend of public and private options.

What are the major problems in transition programs?

For whatever reason, youths with disabling conditions are often ill-prepared for the critical transition from school to work. While it is important to offer young people a wide range of services, pulling together a provider consortium can be very difficult. Some school systems are over-protective, insular, and are only reluctantly involved in the community. Community-based programs and state VR agencies can be too careful about who they serve, too slow to innovate and too eager to offer students a traditional work adjustment program. Funding for transition programs is complex and uncertain. Most programs require multiple funding sources because of restrictive policies and the need to underwrite services that will be provided by a variety of public and private agencies.

What kind of transition programs are the best investments for a community?

A quality transitional program should have the following "desirable characteristics:"

- First, vocational services should begin in earnest no later than the last year or two of secondary school. During this time, some portion of the school day should be spent outside of the school where the student is in contact with other community resources.
- Second, the service system should be organized by first identifying the services that will be needed and then deciding who are the best providers. Never duplicate an existing service and only add those that are truly needed by youth who will be served.
- Third, if the collaborative/advocacy model is adopted, a coordinator should be employed who is not limited by rules, regulations and organizational turf wars. A tough-minded advocate/coordinator is a very important component and of the two roles, advocacy is probably the most critical.
- Fourth, the transition team should work with private industry in developing training and work sites in the community instead of relying solely on the public sector.

Supported Work in Small Communities

WINNER

Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.
Barre, Vermont

FINALISTS

PACE Training and Evaluation Center
Star City, West Virginia

Washington County Vocational Workshop
Nashville, Illinois

Introduction

Supported work is one of the most rapidly expanding employment programs for persons with disabilities. While the exact number is unknown, an increasing percentage of communities throughout the nation have at least one such program. Supported work is designed to provide permanent employment opportunities in the community for persons unable to work in such settings unless they receive on-going services. Program staff provide long term training and support as needed at the work site to help clients maintain employment. By definition the programs have no time limit so clients may continue to receive services over a period of several years.

The 1987 Search for Excellence focused on supported work programs in relatively small communities. Only those programs operating in geographic service areas of 100,000 population or less were eligible. This was done in response to comments received from participating organizations during the 1986 Search who suggested that supported employment programs in large communities have a distinct advantage over those in smaller communities because they have access to more employers, greater job opportunities, and better public transportation.

Program excellence was determined by using three measures of "benefits to clients served" and two measures of "program productivity." The client benefit measures included: (1) annualized average earnings of program clients; (2) quality of placement – a composite score for the type of work settings used and the extent of integration on the job with non-disabled persons; and (3) the percentage of clients who left the program during the past two years who obtained competitive employment or occupational skill training. The two measures of program productivity were: (1) average program cost per client per day; and (2) the number of client days in the program per day of direct service staff time. These measures were weighted, with the measures of benefits to clients currently in the program given the greatest weight, and a composite "score" calculated by computer for each applicant. This estimate of overall program excellence was then adjusted to take into account the severity of persons served and the 1986 area unemployment rate. The table which follows shows the five measures and the two modifiers used and the weights assigned to each.

How Excellence Was Measured

Measures	Weighted Values
1. ***Benefits to Current Clients***	
a. Average annualized income	52%
b. Quality of placement	13%
2. ***Benefits to Former Clients***	
Percentage obtaining competitive employment or skill training	5%
3. ***Productivity Measures***	
a. Average cost per program day	10%
b. Client days per direct service staff day.	10%
4. ***Modifiers***	
a. Client severity	7%
b. Area unemployment rate	3%
	100%

A total of 49 applications were received from organizations in 27 states. All but five entries were determined to be eligible and their performance was compared to all other applicants.

The following data, using median values, characterizes the "typical" supported work program:

- Clients earned $2,950 per year
- Clients earned just over $3.00 per hour
- 39% of clients leaving the program for any reason left to enter competitive employment or occupational skill training
- Daily program costs per client average $40 per day (not including client earnings)
- The client-to-direct service staff ratio was 3.8 to 1.0
- Clients served had an average of 2.3 disabling conditions or other characteristics related to severity (such as chronic mental illness, moderate mental retardation, require adaptations to the workplace, live in a supervised setting, etc.)
- The communities in which these programs operate had an average population of about 55,000 and a 1986 unemployment rate of seven percent

WINNER:

Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.
Barre, Vermont

The 1987 award winner for Supported Work in Small Communities demonstrates that such programs are feasible and that they can operate very effectively outside major metropolitan areas. It also shows that supported work can be economically viable even when clients are placed in a wide variety of individual employment settings. Finally, excellent programs can function in most any type of community and need not be dependent on grants or on large government set-aside contracts.

The Community and Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.

Transition I, this year's winning supported work program, is located in Barre, Vermont, which has a population of about 9,800. Barre is adjacent to Montpelier, the capital of Vermont, which has an additional 8,000 residents. The program serves clients from throughout Washington County which has a total population of 52,000 — about average for all applicants in the 1987 Search. The largest employers in the area are the Vermont state government, an insurance company, and the granite industry. No other industry or business dominates the labor market and most people work for relatively small companies. Since there are more job opportunities in the service industry than in manufacturing, most clients are placed with small private employers in service occupations.

Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc., which operates Transition I, is a private non-profit corporation with a 1986 annual budget of $5.5 million. It serves nearly 2,400 people a year in a variety of programs including mental health for children and adults, substance abuse, alternate care for persons with chronic mental illness, a variety of residential programs, work activity for persons with developmental disabilities, as well as two supported employment projects in addition to Transition I. These include the Greenmountain Workforce which serves persons with chronic mental illness, and a small experimental program for people with moderate and severe mental retardation which employs work crews in janitorial and factory work. The outstanding performance of Washington County Mental Health Services was also recognized in the 1986 Search for Excellence when it was selected as one of four finalists in the competition for Community-Based Supported Employment Programs.

Patricia Morgan (R), Job Training Coordinator, meets with clients daily to review performance and identify problems before they interfere with work.

"Transition I," The Award-Winning Supported Work in Small Communities Program

Clients in Transition I all have mental retardation and are eligible for services from the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The program uses a wide range of employers throughout the community, matching individual clients to specific jobs rather than using mobile work crews or enclaves.

The program began in 1979 when the organization was selected by both the State Department of Mental Health and the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services to create a community-based employment initiative. Based on the early work of Virginia Commonwealth University, Transition I was designed as a demonstration effort in Vermont to serve persons who were ordinarily unable to get or keep jobs in the competitive sector. As an alternative to traditional work activity and sheltered employment, it is one of the early pioneers in supported employment and may well be the very first program of this type to operate outside a university setting.

The first five years of Transition I were funded by a Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Establishment Grant. In 1985 it began receiving funds from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (about two-thirds of the total) and the Department of Mental Health (about one-third). Current annual expenses are approximately $120,000. In effect, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, because it can provide only time-limited funding for client services, covers the costs of the early, most intensive phase of the program, and the Department of Mental Health pays the cost of the long-term support services which can continue indefinitely.

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Clients in Transition I all have mental retardation and many have secondary problems such as physical limitations and behavior problems. The average age is 26, and all meet the Rehabilitation Services Administration's definition of "severely disabled," in that traditional job placement either has been, or is considered highly unlikely by the vocational rehabilitation agency. In the past few years the characteristics of clients served have been changing with an increased number now having secondary problems such as mental illness, behavioral disorders, poor motivation, and lack of family support.

The program is staffed by 4.2 full-time equivalent persons, including a coordinator, a job developer, two training specialists and a portion of a secretary's time. The training specialists function as job coaches providing all on-site services. Transition I is the prototype for five other supported work programs in Vermont. A staff person who worked with the first two transition programs now works for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation assisting other communities in developing similar programs.

The program currently serves an active caseload of 33 clients, some of whom have been involved since 1979. Its current goal is to place 12 new people a year in the community. Clients are referred to the program in many ways, but they cannot begin until they are accepted for services by the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Individual client planning follows a process common to other long-term vocational programs where annual service plans are reviewed and updated quarterly. Participants in this planning process include the client, parents, program staff, a state vocational rehabilitation counselor, and, if the client is a ward of the state, a representative of the Department of Mental Health.

Transition I client Charlie Lussier works at a car dealership doing both janitorial work and automobile maintenance.

The key feature of Transition I which accounts for much of its success is the careful match of individual clients to specific jobs in the community. The first step in this process is a rigorous one to two day evaluation of the client. Staff use an "Individual Skill Summary" to document specific skills, deficits, and special factors which need to be considered in matching the person to a job. For example, some clients prefer working with other people, while others prefer to work alone. The assessment includes work habits, social adjustment, functional academics (e.g., reading, money handling), and physical capacities such as strength and endurance. Information is obtained through interviews with the client and his or her family, observations by other vocational professionals, and the use of simulated work tasks to assess interests and capabilities.

"The key feature of Transition I which accounts for much of its success is the careful match of individual clients to specific jobs in the community."

The other half of this systematic matching process are the requirements of each job site. Program staff visit the site, observe the job, and talk to the employer and immediate supervisor. They actually do the work long enough to fully understand the job and how to teach it to a client. A comprehensive job analysis is then written which describes all the tasks necessary to succeed.

When a client begins, the training specialist works full time as a job coach to train the client and make sure the work is meeting the employer's expectations — even if this means helping to get the work done. This phase of the training process is intensive and typically continues for six to eight weeks until the client can be left without direct staff support for longer periods of time.

When program staff are required at the worksite less than 20 per cent of the weekly hours, the client is considered to have completed the training phase. Depending on a variety of factors this can take from two to six months. At that point, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation considers this to be placement into competitive employment. If the client continues working another 90 days, DVR may close the case as successfully employed. If there is any question about the placement not being stable and permanent, closure as a successful rehabilitant is delayed until the counselor and program staff agree that the client is likely to remain on that job.

Direct contact by program staff with the client/employee and employer declines as the client becomes more independent. The minimum level of ongoing contact between client and staff is once a month. These regular meetings are always in person at the worksite, though they may be supplemented with telephone calls. Program staff are strongly committed to on-site reviews, since personal interaction facilitates information sharing and reinforces the commitment between Transition I and the employer. The immediate supervisor of each client completes a written evaluation once a month as part of the regular visits by program staff.

Regardless of how long they have been working, program clients receive help in finding a new position if they lose their job or are determined no longer able to perform their duties. In that sense, clients who continue to work or who are willing and able to work are never closed by the program. Since the first placement in 1980 through December 1987, the program has placed 66 individuals in a total of 95 jobs. Some clients, unable to sustain the transition to a supported employment position even with extensive supports, have returned to programs they were in before, such as work activity.

The following list illustrates the kinds of jobs and employers involved in several recent placements:

Job Title	Type of Employer
Warehouse worker	Bottling company
File clerk	Collection agency
Kitchen helper	College food service
Courtesy clerk	Grocery store
Dishwasher	Food service
Tying machine operator	Newspaper publisher
Quality control inspector	Uniform service
Janitor	Car dealership
Dishwasher	Food service
Chambermaid	Community care home
Janitor	Janitorial service
Salad preparer	Food service
Dietary aide	Nursing home

These are typically jobs which have high turnover rates. Consequently, employers benefit by hiring motivated workers who are carefully selected, well trained, and provided support services. Clients earn the same wages, are paid directly by the employer, and receive the same benefits (paid holidays, vacation, and insurance) as do other workers. One employer observed that his employee from this program actually receives more benefits than other workers because she has continued on the job longer than the one year required to be eligible for most benefits.

The administrators of Transition I monitor the program's community impact and produce a monthly report which compares benefits-to-costs in several ways. For example, during a recent month the gross earnings of clients were 1.44 times the total operating cost of the program. The overall "return on investment" each month is almost two to one, if the following factors are taken into account: gross earnings, reductions in public benefits, and the estimated cost of maintaining clients in work activity programs.

Transition I places clients individually with employers. Marla Covey is employed by a private janitorial service as a hotel maid.

Critics of supported employment often cite the isolation and loneliness of client/employees as a shortcoming of the individual placement model. However, most clients in the Transition I program are accepted by fellow workers and participate with other employees in non-work activities, such as eating lunch and going bowling. Many also take advantage of other social and recreational opportunities in the community, often as a result of encouragement by program staff. A support group for program participants provides an opportunity to share job experiences, meet other clients socially, and enjoy recreational activities. About half the clients attend the monthly support group.

On Excellence

There are a number of features of Transition I which enable it to achieve a high level of excellence as a supported work program:

★ The program has a single, simple goal – to enable individuals with mental retardation and other limitations to obtain and retain jobs in competitive employment settings.

★ Staff, administrators and others associated with the program are strongly committed to demonstrating that persons with severe disabling conditions can be successful if trained and provided support services at community work sites.

★ The program demonstrates that transition to competitive employment does not necessarily require a traditional progression through various day programs to be successful. Many clients enter this program directly after completing their schooling and have never been involved in work activity or sheltered employment.

★ There is "strength in smallness." This modest program in a small community has some distinct advantages over larger programs in more populated areas. There is a strong sense of community identification and pride in the accomplishments of a demonstrated success. This makes it easier to "sell" the program to employers, who in turn are helpful in recruiting other employers.

★ Transition I has wisely justified its cost of operation. By documenting the savings it generates, the program has been able to get permanent funding, rather than time-limited grant funds, partly because costs are carefully monitored in relation to financial benefits. The Vermont legislature has assured the continuity of this and similar programs in the state through a line-item allocation of funds specifically for supported work programs.

In summary, the Transition I program provides benefits to everyone connected with it – there are no losers, only winners. Disabled persons get good permanent jobs and are more broadly integrated into the community. Employers get dependable workers who match other employees in productivity and have lower rates of turnover. By working together, the state agencies and the organization operating the program accomplish their goals at a reasonable cost. The community as a whole gains a new appreciation of its many citizens who are severely disabled, and saves money in the process.

For further information on this winning program, contact:

William Ashe, Director, Adult Developmental Disabilities Center.
or
Patty Morgan, Coordinator, Transition I
Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 462
Barre, Vermont 05641
Telephone: (802) 479-2502

FINALISTS

Supported Work in Small Communities

PACE Training and Evaluation Center
Star City, West Virginia

This is the second year PACE Center has been a finalist in the category of supported work. PACE Center serves people from throughout Monongalia County, which has a population of about 75,000. In addition to its Supported Work Program, the Center provides evaluation, work adjustment and long-term sheltered employment.

The Supported Work Program operates at a Federal government facility of the Department of Energy and serves 35 people daily. The jobs include janitorial work, grounds maintenance, mail handling and copying/duplicating services. Most clients have mental retardation (77 percent) with a significant number also having limiting physical or medical conditions (46 percent) and/or mental illness (20 percent).

PACE supported work clients have considerable independence in positions like grounds maintenance.

Earnings and fringe benefits are excellent. In 1986-87 clients earned an average of $950 per month. Fringe benefits after one year of employment include ten days of paid holidays, ten days of paid vacation, and additional money to be used at the client's discretion for health insurance. The program has a low turnover rate, but many clients have moved on to regular competitive employment. The local Board of Education provides an instructor to prepare individuals who achieve competitive potential for job placement. Other support services are provided by work site and facility staff as needed.

The program is self-sustaining and no local funds or purchase of service fees are needed to cover client earnings, program operation, and administrative costs. It has a staff of four full-time equivalent persons and an annual program cost of about $140,000 not including client wages.

The success of this program has, at least in part, led to the development of two new initiatives designed specifically for persons with chronic mental illness. In 1987 the Center began providing supported employment in janitorial work with various local public and private employers. Early in 1988 a training and supported work program will begin in food services, preparing meals for a county jail. Together these new programs will provide supported employment for an additional 20 to 30 client employees.

For futher information on this exemplary program, contact:

George Demanelis, Executive Director
PACE Training and Evaluation Center
P.O. Box 4241
Star City, WV 26504
Telephone: (304) 599-0513

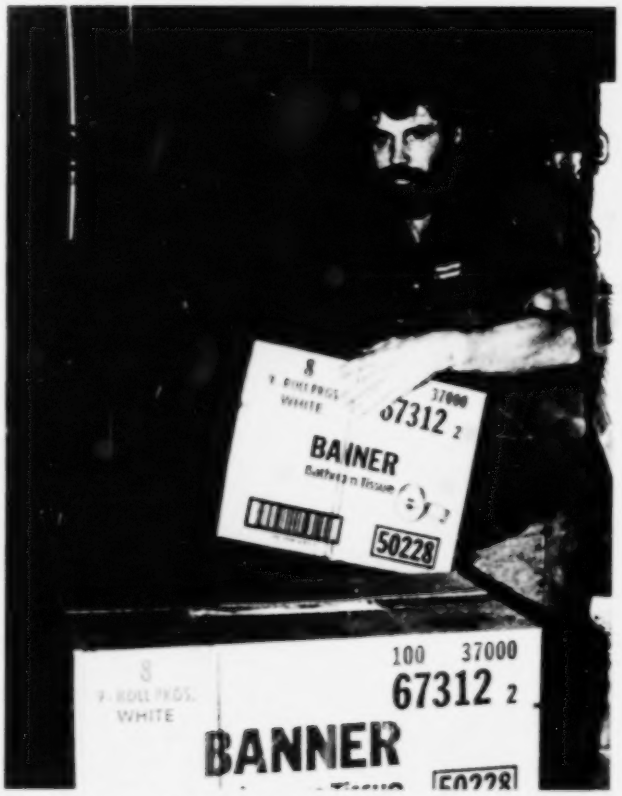
3.

Washington County Vocational Workshop
Nashville, Illinois

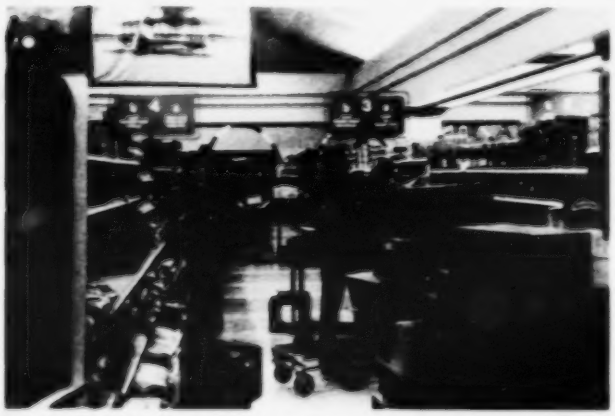
This supported work program in South-Central Illinois is relatively new, starting in mid-1986. It operates at nearby Scott Air Force Base, and provides work opportunities in shelf stocking and custodial services for the commissary. The contract was obtained through the efforts of the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped (NISH) and the President's Committee for the Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped.

Clients in the program generally have little or no prior paid work experience. Fifteen of the 18 people served during one particular month had never earned more than $2 per hour and only one had ever earned more than minimum wage. Almost half had been working in the organization's sheltered employment program.

The Washington County supported work program currently has a capacity of 20 people, with annual expenses of $225,000 and a staff of 2.7 full-time equivalent persons. During the first year of operation the jobs secured for clients paid an average of $4.89 per hour plus benefits. After one year employees are eligible for ten paid holidays and seven vacation days. Until October 1987 clients were paid an additional $1.08 per hour as compensation for sick leave time and for their own purchase of health insurance. At that time both the hourly base wage rate and the fringe benefits allowance were significantly increased — wages up 26% and insurance up 70%. At the same time, the program is serving a higher proportion of persons with severe disabilities. Several clients who were initially unable to make the transition into a competitive setting returned to the facility's sheltered program to work on specific problems. They have since returned to the job site and are now succeeding.



Shelf stocking at the Scott Air Force base commissary provides permanent jobs for program clients.



Despite a higher proportion of clients with severe disabilities, the Washington County program provides one of the highest salary levels for its workers.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

Jerry Boner, Executive Director,
or
Paul Shy, Contract Manager
Washington County Vocational Workshop
P.O. Box 273, Holzhauer Drive
Nashville, IL 62263
Telephone: 618/327-4461

Findings and Observations: Supported Work in Small Communities

This section is based on interviews with supported work providers, employers, and funders, a review of application data and program descriptions submitted to the Search, and on-site visits with program staff, work site employers, and representatives of community agencies.

How much better than "average" are the top-rated programs?

The average program this year provides $2,952 in annual earnings for their clients. Yet, clients of the top three ranked programs earn an average of $7,961 a year! The top ranked programs are also more productive in their use of staff and financial resources. They have a client-to-staff ratio of 7.1 to one while the ratio for the average program is only 3.8 clients per staff member. The top three programs have daily costs of $28 compared to $34 for the average applicant. The three finalists also generate $1.52 in client earnings for every dollar of program cost, while the average program generates only 63¢.

What are the major advantages and disadvantages of the most common models of Supported Work?

Programs using mobile work crews are often able to use crews as evaluation and training sites for clients who need exposure to real work in the community. They can also accommodate clients with very low levels of productivity. However, work crews are limited to the range and type of work available in the contracts. Generally, the most common jobs using work crews are janitorial services which, unfortunately, provide little opportunity for interaction with non-disabled persons.

Enclaves are quite similar to work crews in that they operate with several clients working together in a specific work area for one employer. The advantages and disadvantages are also similar to those for work crews. The specific location of the enclave and the time of day the work is done determine the extent of integration with persons who are not disabled.

The individual placement model of supported employment provides potential access to the widest range of jobs. The only limits are the perseverance of staff in locating jobs, the quality of training on the job site, and the availability of continuing supportive services. The cost of these programs is relatively high, particularly for the first several weeks after clients are placed. Consequently, individual placement programs generally serve clients who have higher levels of functioning than those in work crews and enclaves. Additionally, these programs require skilled care in matching clients to specific work sites.

What effect do unemployment rates and the size of community have on supported work programs?

The relationship between program performance and unemployment rates is very low. Similarly, community size is not related to the level of program performance. The evidence is not only statistical (low correlations), but is borne out in the review of applications to the Search. There are very successful programs operating in communities with higher-than-average unemployment rates and successful programs in small as well as large communities. In effect, location in a small community and high rates of unemployment are not the cause of poor program performance.

Will supported work programs make facility-based work services (sheltered employment and work activity) obsolete?

An increasing number of rehabilitation organizations are clearly demonstrating that supported work programs can successfully serve persons who previously were thought *not* to be able to work outside of sheltered workshops. Many clients have succeeded in moving out of work activity and sheltered employment into supported work. Others have been able to bypass workshops and move directly into supported work as their first employment experience. As supported work continues to expand, the number of long-term workshops will decline in number and size, but they will not disappear. Facility-based work programs will increasingly be challenged to serve a higher proportion of severely disabled persons than they do now, particularly those with intractable behavior problems and very low productivity. This will increase the cost per person served. Ideally, every community should have a variety of employment program options to provide clients an opportunity to work in the setting that best meets their needs and enables them to realize their maximum potential.

What are the most important characteristics of a successful supported work program?

- They produce earnings for clients at reasonable cost.
- Flexibility in programming — no arbitrary limits regarding the type, intensity, or duration of services. This allows for serving a wide range of clients in terms of their skills, interests, and limitations.
- Competent staff who are encouraged to be innovative, who are given clear direction regarding program goals, and who can relate effectively both to employers and clients.
- A commitment of the operating organization to make sure the needs of *both* clients and employers are met. The best supported work programs strive to please employers and in return place more clients.
- A comprehensive network of vocational program alternatives in the community so that clients who are not appropriate for supported work are provided realistic alternatives.
- A recognition of the long-term commitment necessary to both employers and clients. Programs with insufficient or time-limited supportive services must either be selective about who they accept as clients or risk a high rate of failure.

Work Services for the Severely Disabled

WINNER

Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs, Inc.
Colorado Springs, Colorado

FINALISTS

Napa Valley P.S.I., Inc.
Napa, California

Pioneer Center for the Exceptional
McHenry, Illinois

Introduction

Work services programs provide an opportunity for persons with severe disabilities to earn an income in a sheltered setting. These programs are often called "work activity" and are designed for people whose level of productivity is very low, typically less than 25% compared to non-disabled workers. Some people served in work services improve over long periods of time and subsequently move into other rehabilitation programs such as sheltered employment, work adjustment, or supported work. Some eventually obtain competitive employment. However, many continue to participate in work services programs for years with little improvement in productivity.

Programs vary in their emphasis on work and non work-related training. Some work services programs provide little paid work and focus on training for independent living and educational services for personal and social adjustment. Others concentrate heavily on work and work skills, providing full-time paid employment and also training in the skills and behaviors necessary to be successfully employed. In order to recognize work services programs serving persons with particularly severe disabilities, eligibility for the 1987 Search was restricted to programs where at least 75 percent of entering clients had productivity levels of less than 25 percent that of non-disabled workers.

Each application was assessed using two measures of benefits to clients served and two measures of program productivity. The client benefit measures were: (1) annual economic value, as measured by adding the average annual client wages and the dollar value of fringe benefits, such as paid holidays, vacation time, sick leave, and insurance, but excluding required employee benefits, such as Social Security and worker's compensation; and (2) the percentage of clients leaving the program, regardless of the reason, who moved to competitive, sheltered or supported employment, or to occupational skill training. The two measures of program productivity were: (1) the average cost per client day, using total program operating expenses, both direct and indirect but not including client wages; and (2) the ratio of clients to direct service staff.

The measures of client benefits and program productivity were weighted with the greater emphasis given to client benefits, and a composite score was calculated for each applicant. The resulting "performance scores" were then adjusted to take into account the severity of clients served and the 1986 area unemployment rate. In effect, this helped to reward programs serving clients with particularly severe and multiple disabilities and those operating in communities with high rates of unemployment. The measures and weights or values assigned to each are shown below:

How Excellence Was Measured

Measures	Weighted Values
1. *Benefits to Clients*	
a. Benefits to current clients Average annual wages plus dollar value of fringe benefits	45%
b. Benefits to former clients Persons obtaining competitive, sheltered, or supported employment, occupational skill training	5%
2. *Productivity*	
a. Average cost per program day	10%
b. Number of client days per day of direct service staff	10%
3. *Modifiers*	
a. Client severity	5%
b. Area unemployment rate	5%
	100%

A total of 58 applications were received from programs in 30 states which together serve over 4,000 clients a year. The following data using median values characterize the "typical" work services program:

- 61 clients are served each day — they work 15½ hours per week, earning $ 82 per hour
- Annual program budgets average $263,000, not including wages paid to clients
- Daily program costs, excluding client wages, average $21 per client
- Clients earn a total of $589 annually, including wages and the dollar value of fringe benefits
- Each program has an average of 8.5 full-time equivalent direct service staff and a ratio of 8.3 clients to one staff member
- 22% of clients leaving the program are placed at a higher level such as sheltered, supported, or competitive employment

WINNER

Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs, Inc.
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs, Inc. is an innovative organization that provides not only programs common to many rehabilitation facilities but also several new programs, such as those serving injured workers, persons with head injuries, and supported employment. The result is an unusually broad range of services and work opportunities for individuals with severe disabilities.

The Community and Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs

Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs, Inc. serves over 1700 people a year, most of whom are residents of Colorado Springs and El Paso County, which has a population of 381,000. Major sources of employment are the service sector, including tourism, and light manufacturing, especially electronics. Two nearby military installations and the Air Force Academy also provide a stable source of jobs and income to the area. Most Goodwill clients are hired by small businesses with five to ten employees. The 1986 area unemployment rate was 7.3 per cent, somewhat higher than the average for all other applicants. Colorado Springs Goodwill has a history of positive growth in size, variety, and quality of its programs. In 1956 it started as a branch of Denver Goodwill, employing six people in a typical store for recycled goods. A second store opened in 1958 for receiving, processing, and selling merchandise. In 1961 it became an autonomous organization with 26 employees, moving to its present location in 1963. Today, Goodwill of Colorado Springs operates five retail stores and a number of rehabilitation programs out of several locations, including a remodeled grocery store, two old homes, and the main facility which is an amalgamation of several buildings. It is one of three workshops in the county for persons with disabilities.

Annual expenditures in 1986 were about $4.8 million, almost five times that of 1976. Significantly, a major source of operating funds, 53 percent, is generated by the sale of donated goods. Fees for services to clients account for 28 percent, 16 percent is generated by contract work, and the remaining 3 percent comes from a variety of sources including donations. In 1986, nearly $1.8 million in wages and benefits was paid out to 833 clients and employees with disabilities.

Goodwill gets considerable visibility, recognition, and assistance from community leaders. Three groups are especially noteworthy: a distinquished and active Board of Directors; a separate Advisory Board which includes a number of former Board members; and the Projects With Industry (PWI) Business Advisory Council, which started several years ago with Goodwill's first PWI grant. The PWI Council is made up primarily of corporate personnel directors who provide guidance in several areas such as planning for vocations of the future. They also help bring in contracts and identify potential community sites for work experience, supported employment, and competitive employment — all of which benefit clients of the Work Services Program.

Contracts with local companies provide a variety of jobs ideally suited for persons with severe disabilities.

Goodwill first expanded into rehabilitation programming in 1967 when it started an activities program for clients of the regional Mental Retardation Commission. Paid work began in 1969 with six clients working on contract jobs. A major shift toward providing high quality employment and a more aggressive commitment to help clients make the transition to competitive employment occurred in 1979 when the Industrial Services Division, responsible for contract work, was placed administratively within Goodwill's Rehabilitation Department. A second landmark in the development of Goodwill occurred in 1986 when the concept of "proactive programming" was adopted to more effectively shape the behavior of clients and maximize their earned income. The next major event marking Goodwill's growth and commitment to employment of persons with disabilities will be the integration of all programs in a new facility which is now in the planning and capital fundraising stage.

In addition to Work Services, Goodwill provides a variety of rehabilitation programs including: Vocational Evaluation & Testing, Work Adjustment, Work Experience (particularly for Special Education students who are still in school), a Comprehensive Head Injury Program, a Supported Employment Program, and a Rehabilitation Program for Injured Workers.

Permanent employment for 57 persons is provided in five retail stores for recycled goods, an "as is" merchandise outlet, and a furniture restoration business. These seven units operate much like private businesses, providing competitive employment to persons with and without disabilities. They also provide real work settings which are used for evaluation, work adjustment, and work experience. Goodwill periodically conducts an educational program, "Disability Awareness Training", for community employers, especially managers and supervisory personnel. It is designed to help participants change their attitudes and behavior toward people with disabilities. Another example of Goodwill's creative and diverse programming is their newest initiative, which provides evaluation of the future employment and earning potential of persons involved in divorce settlement negotiations. Several other ideas are on the drawing board in various stages of exploration and planning. Consequently, Goodwill is viewed by both the business and rehabilitation communities as a leader and innovator.

Many work services clients learn valuable skills at Goodwill's furniture restoration unit or one of five retail stores operated by the agency.

3

The Winning Work Services for the Severely Disabled Program

Goodwill's Work Services Program serves a daily average of 128 people, all referred and funded by the Mid-Colorado Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled. MRC, a unit of state goverment, is responsible for services to persons with developmental disabilities. Annual program expenses, excluding client earnings, are just under $300,000. All clients are mentally retarded and typically also have other limitations such as physical disabilities, mental health problems, and significant behavior problems. The average client had 4.7 such conditions or problems. The staff totals 17.75 full-time equivalent persons including: 10 production technicians who provide direct supervision in the workshop, 5 1/2 vocational counselors, a rehabilitation technician who serves as an assistant to the counselors, and portions of the time of a nurse and a program coordinator.

An unusually wide range of support services is available at Goodwill, including: basic education, physical therapy, preventive dental hygiene, medication monitoring, sex education, exercise classes, and routine physical exams. The local mental health agency has two persons assigned part-time to Goodwill, making their counseling and other services readily available to clients in Work Services.

"Proactive programming is based on the philosophy that changing the behavior of clients is best accomplished by reinforcing positive behaviors rather than reacting to negative behaviors."

The program operates in what appears to be a traditional workshop setting at Goodwill's main building. The most common jobs are packaging, collating, assembly, and simple machine operation. However, in the past few years an increasing number of Work Services clients spend part of their work week on jobs in the community. Some are in Goodwill operated retail stores or in furniture restoration, while others work on mobile work crews or enclaves where they perform a variety of jobs including cleaning bus shelters and the terminal building, painting fire hydrants, performing janitorial work, and preparing government documents for microfilming. During 1987 one-third of all Work Services clients spent some time in one or more of these community work sites.

The Work Services Program has two features which contribute heavily to its success. First, there is considerable emphasis on the primary goal of assisting clients to achieve the highest level of employment, whether in the Work Services Program itself or by moving to employment in the community. Second, Goodwill staff use proactive programming, which has proven to be an effective approach to improve individual client work performance.

By reinforcing positive behaviors, Goodwill staff help clients adapt to the workplace.

By maximizing earned income for as many clients as possible, especially through competitive employment, Goodwill staff has shifted the *kinds* of program services offered and *how* services are provided. For example, most support services such as personal counseling, and social and recreational activities are provided primarily *after* work hours so that client/workers can maximize their earnings. The goal of independent living through the teaching of homemaking and related skills is seen as the responsibility of other community organizations. Goodwill works on such skills only when there is a direct connection with employment, such as when a client needs help with travel to work.

Proactive programming is based on the philosophy that changing the behavior of clients is best accomplished by *reinforcing positive behaviors* rather than reacting to *negative behaviors*. For example, clients are reinforced for improved attention to work rather than chided for being easily distracted. In the beginning, consultants were brought in to train staff, especially counselors and those providing direct supervision on the job. Topics included the rationale for this approach and practical guidance on particular behaviors needing change. Proactive progamming became well established as staff became comfortable and effective with the technique. Counselors now work directly with the production technicians in planning and implementing behavior change with individual clients at the work site. Progress toward achieving these behavioral goals is charted as often as several times a day to reinforce and reward positive change.

Goodwill not only provides a wide variety of work-related programs, but also offers support services such as basic education, physical exams and therapy, preventive dental hygiene, medication monitoring, and (shown above) exercise classes.

There has been a dramatic improvement in the productivity of Work Services clients since the adoption of proactive programming and as a result of several changes made by a creative engineer in the structuring of jobs and work flow. In a recent 18 month period, overall client productivity improved 37%. More importantly, some clients who were thought to have already reached their maximum potential were able to leave Work Services for supported or competitive employment. For those who remained there was a significant increase in earnings.

While the program provides long term work for most clients, some are able to make the transition to higher levels of employment or training. During the past two years, 59 per cent of the 41 clients who left the program for any reason were successful in that transition, with the largest number obtaining supported employment. Goodwill's Placement Center staff work closely with clients who appear ready for either part-time placement while continuing to work part time at the facility, or full-time placement in supported work or competitive employment.

On Excellence

The following factors contribute to the high level of performance of the Work Services Program at Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs. They were derived from a review of program data, descriptive information, and interviews with staff and community leaders. Viewed individually, the factors are not all that unusual, but in combination they produce a synergistic effect that results in programmatic excellence.

★ There is wide agreement that this program has a particularly strong focus on *work* for its clients. Often, "work activity level" programs provide a large proportion of time and services for social, recreational, and community independence goals. The primary goal at Goodwill is to assist clients in achieving their highest possible level of earnings. While competitive employment may not be attained by many Work Services clients even after several years in the program, their goal is to earn as much income as possible.

★ Staff work together in planning, monitoring and implementing specific plans to reinforce and improve work related behaviors. The program has managed to strike a balance between the sometimes conflicting goals of "production" and "rehabilitation," so that the needs of rehabilitation programming are achieved simultaneously with the production requirements of employers.

★ While it may sound obvious, the quality of program staff and the atmosphere in which they work are key factors in the success of any rehabilitation program. This clearly is the case at Colorado Springs Goodwill, where staff work well together and there is a strong sense of teamwork and job satisfaction. Individuals are encouraged to be innovative and are provided training to improve their skills. Administration sees its role as providing resources and encouragement which enable staff to excel, rather than imposing rigid requirements on how the job should be done.

★ The organization works hard to have a high community profile and to be an important component in making the Colorado Springs area a better place to live. Through a positive image of community "goodwill", they have been quite successful in attracting influential, competent, and helpful community leaders to serve on the Board of Directors, the Advisory Board, and the PWI Business Advisory Council. Their impact is felt through the provision of technical and professional expertise, guidance in planning for the future, fund raising, and opening new job opportunities to Goodwill clients.

★ The organization is flexible and responsive, constantly modifying programs or adding new services to meet particular community needs. Proactive programming has enabled Work Services staff to better serve people with serious behavior problems that affect their productivity and employment potential.

In addition to facility-based jobs like packaging, collating, assembly, and machine operation, a growing number of clients spend part of their time on jobs in the community.

In summary, The Goodwill Industries Work Services Program has developed into a flexible, well-managed, competently staffed, successful program that uses its community and other resources to best advantage for its clients. The program provides either directly or through supported work a wide variety of jobs at a number of Goodwill and community work sites. This strategy makes it easier to match client capabilities and interests with jobs on which they are likely to succeed.

For further information on this winning program, contact:

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Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs, Inc.
2320 West Colorado Avenue,
Colorado Springs, CO 80904
Telephone: 303/635-4483

FINALISTS

Work Services for the Severely Disabled

NAPA VALLEY P.S.I., INC.
Napa, California

Napa Valley P.S.I. (Products, Services and Industries) is a dynamic organization dedicated to providing the highest possible earnings to its severely disabled clients. The agency has annual operating expenses of about $2.7 million and has been in operation for 15 years. It provides programs of vocational evaluation and work adjustment in addition to work services. Clients have access to placement in supported work and competitive employment through a contract with another community facility.

The work services program serves about 130 clients a day. Annual expenditures in 1986 were $1.4 million, of which a major portion was for materials used in the manufacture of products. The program serves clients of the Department of Rehabilitation, the Napa County Mental Health Department, and a local state hospital for persons with mental illness. Program participation is a transitional experience for many clients who move into supported work, competitive employment, or who return to their home communities after discharge from the state hospital. For others the program provides long term, permanent employment.

Napa Valley P.S.I. strives to maintain its image as a community industry rather than a traditional rehabilitation facility. Clients are referred to as "employees," direct supervision on the job is provided by "foremen," and the counselor is called a "personnel manager." Direct service staff total 17.8 full-time equivalent people. The program provides a high level of earnings for its client/employees through a combination of high hourly wages ($1.86 per hour on average in 1986) and a full eight hour day. In fact, Napa Valley P.S.I. provided the most hours per week of paid work and the highest average annual earnings and fringe benefits of all 1987 Search applicants in the Work Services Program category — just over $3,000.

The largest source of work at Napa Valley PSI is a contract with the Federal government for wooden file boxes and credenzas.

NAPA Casket and Valley Stained Glass, branches of PSI, Inc., operate much like small businesses, providing the highest average annual earnings and fringe benefits of all Search applicants in Work Services for the Severely Disabled.

Work is generated through prime manufacturing rather than traditional sub-contracts. The production of wooden file boxes and credenzas for the Federal government provides the largest number of job opportunities. Other products include caskets and custom-made decorative stained glass.

Through an arrangement with Napa Valley College, clients are provided individual or small group tutoring in reading, math, language development, and driver education and training at no cost to the program. To encourage participation in tutoring, clients receive their average hourly wage for the time they spend in class. Napa Valley P.S.I. is demonstrating that persons with severe disabilities, given the appropriate environment, encouragement, and support, can be remarkably productive participants in the work force.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

Jeanne Fauquet, Executive Director,
or
Betty Moore, Director of Personnel
Napa Valley P.S.I., Inc.
P. O. Box 600
Napa, CA 94559-0600
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3.

Pioneer Center for the Exceptional
McHenry, Illinois

Pioneer Center is chartered by the McHenry County Association for the Retarded and provides a comprehensive array of employment, early intervention, developmental training, community support, and residential programs, primarily for persons with developmental and mental disabilities. In fiscal year 1986-87 a total of 1,012 persons were served in one or more programs. The annual budget is over $4 million for programs in 12 locations in McHenry County.

Developmental Training II, the Work Services Program, serves severely disabled adults, almost two-thirds of whom are at or below the level of "moderate" mental retardation. Nearly all clients were below 25 per cent of competitive standards of productivity at the time they entered the program. In 1986-87 clients earned an average of $1.59 per hour. To provide variety and to challenge and encourage the development of work skills, job assignments for both clients and staff are regularly rotated.

Because of the low functional level of most clients and the high incidence of other conditions such as physical disabilities, behavior problems, and mental illness, program staff provide extensive developmental training. This includes training in basic functional skills, communication, grooming and self care, community orientation, and use of leisure time. Few clients leave the program each year, but those who do tend to move into the Center's work adjustment or sheltered employment program as an interim step to sheltered or supported employment.

Over the years the Center has earned a positive image in the community with other human service organizations, consumer groups, and businesses. Consequently, they are able to retain contracts for years and to secure new ones that provide steady work for their clients. Current contracts involve assembly and packaging at various levels of complexity. Developmental Training II continues to expand the range of work opportunities, helping clients make the fullest use of their capabilities.

For further information on this exemplary program contact:

Ann L. Patla, Executive Director,
Thomas Gollan, Manager, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Developmental Training,
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Pioneer Center for the Exceptional
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Despite serving more severely disabled clients than most other Search applicants, the Center provides wages which are almost three times that of the average program.

Work Services clients perform various assembly and packaging jobs under sub-contracts with local and national manufacturers.

Findings and Observations: Work Services Programs for the Severely Disabled

This section presents several conclusions from a thorough review of data and descriptive information submitted by Search applicants, and extensive telephone and on-site interviews with staff, administrators, and representatives of community organizations who are familiar with these programs.

How much paid work is actually provided in work services programs for the severely disabled?

Programs vary considerably in the amount of work provided to clients. The average program has a total of 30 hours of services a week, including 16-17 hours in paid work, 7 hours in "work-related" services, and 6 hours in other services not directly related to work, such as basic education and training in homemaking skills. About half the programs provide 20 or more hours of paid work per week, but only 15 per cent average 25 hours or more. One-fourth of the applicants provide more time in non-work related services than in paid work and work-related training combined. Even with adequate hourly wages, clients served in programs that provide little time for paid work cannot earn a significant amount.

How much do clients earn in these programs?

Client wages vary widely. A client in the average work services program earns under $600 a year in both wages and benefits, almost one-third of the programs pay less than $300 per year, and a third provide no fringe benefits. The dollar value of fringe benefits is rarely more than $100 a year and averages only about $37. In nearly 90% of the programs, the average client earns less than $1,000 per year. Thus, for most clients in work services, these programs are more a place to go than a place to earn.

How efficient are work services programs at generating earnings for the clients they serve?

One of the most interesting indicators of program performance is the cost of the program (including all direct and indirect costs except for wages paid to clients) for each dollar paid in wages to clients. The typical work services program spends $7.70 for each dollar paid in wages to clients. However, the top three programs ranked by overall performance spend less than half that, with an average cost of $3.20 per dollar of client wages. Only a third of the applicants had an average cost of $4.00 or less for each dollar of client wages paid.

For comparison, long-term sheltered employment programs in the 1986 Search that serve persons who are somewhat less severely disabled and more productive, averaged just under $3.00 of program cost for each dollar in client wages. The average supported work program in this year's Search spent about $1.60 for each dollar of client earnings. Judged in terms of client income generated in relationship to costs, the return on investment in most work services programs for the severely disabled is very low.

How effective are Work Services programs in preparing clients for higher level vocational programs or employment?

Although all work services programs serve clients who have very low work productivity, they are not all equally effective in enabling clients to move to higher level employment programs. Movement out of work services depends both on the program's ability to change client behavior and increase productivity, and on the availability of other program alternatives within the same organization or elsewhere in the community. In the average program, turnover of clients for any reason is about 15% per year. The turnover rate just to higher level programs or employment is much lower, about three percent. The three finalists in this category averaged seven percent of their clients a year moving to work adjustment, sheltered, supported, or competitive employment. However, it is clear that most work services clients will be long term program participants.

Do we really need facility-based work services programs now that supported employment programs have shown they can serve persons with severe disabilities?

The success of supported employment programs has had a major impact on facility-based work services programs. As more clients move out of or by-pass work services programs for supported employment, those remaining in facility-based programs will have the lowest levels of productivity and/or major behavior problems.

Some of the most effective work services programs are in organizations that also provide supported employment. This provides an opportunity to use community work sites for evaluation or try-outs of work services clients, increasing the range of jobs available and the likelihood of matching client capabilities and interests with potential employment.

Facility-based work services programs will continue to provide, at the very least, the role of "employer of last resort," for clients that cannot yet be matched to a supported employment work site.

"What finer purpose is there for time, effort and knowledge than to do our best in restoring what God intended and disability has taken away."

Jeremiah Milbank 1887-1972

About The J.M. Foundation

Born to one of America's leading philanthropic families, Jeremiah Milbank (1887-1972) created The J.M. Foundation in 1924 to enhance the nation's health, rehabilitation, and educational services. From a first-year payout of $61,500, annual disbursements have steadily increased to the current level of approximately $3 million per year.

The Foundation is active in several related fields including: rehabilitation of persons with physical, mental and other disabilities; prevention and wellness, with an emphasis on individual responsibility for health; expansion of effective extramural care; health-related public policy research; alcohol and other drug dependencies; and selected projects in biomedical research and medical education. The Foundation also has a strong interest in educational activities which strengthen America's pluralistic system of free markets, individualism, entrepreneurship, voluntarism, and private enterprise.

In addition, The J.M. Foundation Directors recognize that our nation's future depends on the strength of the American family. Accordingly, we support organizations that enhance the quality of family life and provide today's youth with productive employment opportunities, healthy lifestyles, and positive character development.